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Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION Washington, D.C. 20554

JUN 1 2 1997

Federal Communications Commission Office of Secretary

In the Matter of)
Access Charge Reform) CC Docket No. 96-262
Price Cap Performance Review for Local Exchange Carriers) CC Docket No. 94-1

OPPOSITION OF AT&T CORP. TO PETITION FOR PARTIAL STAY OF GTE SERVICE CORPORATION

Pursuant to Section 1.45(d) of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. §1.45(d), AT&T Corp. ("AT&T") submits this Opposition to the Petition for Partial Stay filed by GTE Service Corporation on June 9, 1997 ("GTE Petition").

GTE's short Petition essentially repeats the relief sought in the previously filed Joint Petition for Partial Stay of Southwestern Bell, Pacific Bell, and Nevada Bell ("Joint Petition") directed to certain portions of the Commission's First Report and Order (FCC 97-158), released May 16, 1997, in CC Docket Nos. 96-262, et al. ("Access Reform Order"), and the Commission's Fourth Report and Order in CC Docket No. 94-1, and Second Report and Order in CC Docket No. 96-262 (FCC 97-159), released May 21, 1997 ("LEC Price Cap Order").¹

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The only relief not sought in the GTE Petition is the Joint Petition's request for stay of that part of the <u>Access Reform Order</u> requiring the price cap LECs to reduce their price cap indices to reflect the completion of the equal access cost amortizations. Evidently, GTE either found no merit to that aspect of the Joint Petition, or believes that portion of the <u>Access Reform Order</u> was inapplicable to it.

In AT&T's Opposition, filed June 9, 1997, we fully discussed the manifest infirmities of the Joint Petition, and pointed out that these stay requests fail to satisfy the basic criteria required to support the granting of stays against these two orders. The points made in the AT&T Opposition to the Joint Petition (which is incorporated herein by reference) are equally applicable to the GTE Petition, which should also be denied by the Commission. Just as in the case of the Joint Petition, GTE has failed to demonstrate that (1) its requested stays would not contravene the public interest, (2) granting the stays would not inflict substantial and irreparable harm on the interexchange carriers and long-distance consumers, (3) without the stays, GTE would suffer irreparable injury, and (4) GTE is likely to succeed on the merits. See AT&T Opposition to Joint Petition at 3-22.²

Besides duplicating the relief requested in the Joint Petition, the GTE Petition (at 2) asks for an additional stay of the following:

"The continuation of sharing obligations incurred during the 1996 access year notwithstanding the required PCI reinitialization using both revised productivity estimates and the CPD figures."

Attached hereto is the Supplemental Declaration of Joel E. Lubin, Vice President of AT&T, which supplements his Declaration previously submitted in connection with the AT&T Opposition to the Joint Petition. Here Mr. Lubin points out the strong financial position of the GTE companies and that their assumed revenue reductions from lower access charges would not adversely affect GTE's interstate earnings level, which would continue to be well above the Commission's prescribed rate of return for the LECs' interstate services.

Moreover, Mr. Lubin points to facts that belie GTE's claim that current competitive conditions in the access markets would preclude GTE from raising interstate access rates to recover access charges it is now required to forego. As Mr. Lubin shows (Supp. Decl. at ¶4), the GTE operating companies earlier this month made effective access rate increases amounting to over \$150 million on an annual basis.

Although the GTE Petition's request for relief, as stated above, is rather obtuse, some light on its complaint is shed by the GTE Comments in Support of the Joint Petition for Partial Stay, dated June 9, 1997. According to the GTE Comments (at 15-16), it chose the lowest X-Factor alternative (4.0 percent), allowed by the Commission's then-existing price cap rules, when it made its 1996 access filing. The Commission's rules at the time imposed a sharing obligation on those price cap LECs selecting to use the 4 percent X-Factor option in their access filings. As it turned out, the interstate earnings levels of the GTE local carriers were sufficiently high to put them in the sharing range.³ Consequently, the GTE companies face an alleged sharing obligation of \$19.2 million for their overearnings in the 1996 access tariff year. GTE Comments at 16.

GTE's complaint in this regard has nothing at all to do with either order it claims to be appealing. Its sharing obligation for the 1996 access year arose specifically from the requirements adopted in the First Report and Order, CC Docket No. 94-1, 10 FCC Rcd. 8961 (1995) ("1995 LEC Price Cap Order"), aff'd sub nom., Bell Atlantic v. FCC, 79 F.3d. 1195 (D.C. Cir. 1996). The 1995 LEC Price Cap Order gave the price cap LECs three X-Factor options (4.0, 4.7, and 5.3 percent) -- with the two lower options subject to sharing obligations depending on the particular LEC's actual earnings results. It so happened that GTE selected the lowest option for its 1996 interstate access filings, and thus benefited from access rates much higher than those it would have charged if it had chosen a higher X-Factor (including the 5.3 percent alternative that would have exempted it from any sharing

According to the Supplemental Declaration of Mr. Lubin, the GTE companies had a combined interstate rate of return of 17.6 percent in 1996.

obligation). GTE's present complaint concerns the provisions of the 1995 LEC Price Cap

Order (which were later affirmed by the D.C. Circuit) and the effect of its past judgment in selecting the lowest X-Factor option for its 1996 access filings.

On the other hand, GTE has no dispute in that respect with the 1997 LEC Price Cap Order. Although that Order requires a recomputation of the LECs' PCIs to reflect a revised X-Factor as if that factor had been in effect with the 1996 access year, it operates only prospectively and does not require any past refunds arising from its application of its revised increased X-Factor. The 1997 LEC Price Cap Order does not alter GTE's sharing obligation as to the past. In fact, even if the Commission had kept the same X-Factors that it adopted in 1995 or had even lowered the X-Factor, GTE would have still been subject to the same sharing obligation it now faces because of its past X-Factor choice and the Commission's price cap rules existing at the time. In short, GTE's complaint about its sharing obligation has no relevance whatever to its instant stay petition directed to the Commission's recently adopted orders.

Wherefore, for the reasons stated herein and in the AT&T Opposition to the Joint Petition, the GTE Petition for Partial Stay should be denied.

Respectfully submitted,

AT&T Corp.

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Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)
Access Charge Reform) CC Docket No. 97-262
Price Cap Performance Review for Local Exchange Carriers) CC Docket No. 94-1

SUPPLEMENTAL DECLARATION OF JOEL E. LUBIN

Joel E. Lubin declares as follows:

- 1. I am Regulatory Vice President-Law and Public Policy of AT&T Corp. ("AT&T"). On June 9, 1997, I executed a declaration in opposition to the Joint Petition by Pacific Bell, Nevada Bell and Southwestern Bell Telephone Company requesting a partial stay of the Commission's recent orders in the above-captioned proceedings on the ground, in part, that certain portions of those orders will inflict "irreparable injury" on those entities. I make this supplemental declaration in opposition to the petition by GTE Service Corporation ("GTE") also requesting a partial stay of those same Commission orders, which asserts that certain portions of the orders will likewise inflict "irreparable injury" on GTE's affiliated local exchange carriers ("LECs"). I hereby incorporate by reference my June 9, 1997 declaration.
- 2. Attached as Schedule 1 of this supplemental declaration is a chart including data on annual revenues, expenses, investment and earnings levels for the calendar year 1996 for GTE's interstate services, as reported by the GTE LECs in those carriers' Form 492 reports to the

Commission. As shown there, the GTE LECs in the aggregate achieved an annual rate of return of 17.62 percent, on annual revenues of almost \$3 billion for that year.

- 3. Schedule 1 also restates the foregoing data for the GTE LECs to reflect the reduction in their interstate access revenues that AT&T estimates will result for GTE from the combined effects of the Commission's orders in these proceedings. As shown in that schedule, even after the revenue reductions the GTE LECs' rate of return would be 14.54 percent. -- still well above the 11.25 percent rate of return prescribed by the Commission for these LEC interstate services.
- Commission's orders on the GTE LECs also does not take account of the fact that those carriers have recently increased substantially their interstate access rates, thereby eliminating virtually all of the "headroom" between their price cap indices ("PCIs") and actual price indices ("APIs"). Specifically, effective June 3, the GTE Telephone Operating Companies by Transmittal No. 1096 (filed May 19, 1997) implemented interstate access rate increases of \$136.6 million on an annualized basis. On that same effective date, the GTE System Telephone Companies, which are the former Contel operating companies acquired by GTE, by Transmittal No. 207 (filed May 19, 1997) implemented interstate access rate increases of \$14.4 million on an annualized basis.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on June 12, 1997.

Joel E. Lubin

GTE 1996 FORM 492 REM 492 INTERSTATE RESULTS (Dollars in thousands)

NR.L.	RYLRNSES WND		AVERAGE NET	RATE OF	RATE OF	
REVENUE	TAXES	NET RETURN	INVESTMENT	RETURN	RETURN@ 11.25%*	RXCESS**

GTE

\$2,968,166

\$2,201,329

\$766,837

\$4,353,071

17.62%

\$489,720

\$277,117

- * This amount represents the aggregate earnings which the carriers would have achieved at an 11.25 percent rate of return presecribed by the commission for the LECs' interstate services.
- **This amount represents the difference between the actual earnings reported by the carriers and the amount of earnings that would have been achieved at an 11.25 percent rate of return, multiplied by a factor of 1.66667 to account for tax effects (at an assumed composite rate of 40 percent).

GTE 1996 FORM 492 INTERSTATE ADJUSTED RESULTS (Dollars in thousands)

	REVENUE	1997 1997 ANNUAL EXPENSES AND ANNUAL FILING FILING IMPACT+ TAXES TAX ADJUSTMENT NET RETURN			AVERAGE NET INVESTMENT	RATE OF RETURN	
GTE	\$2,968,166	(\$223,087)	\$2,201,329	(\$89,235)	\$632,985	\$4 ,353,071	14.54%

⁺ This amount represents AT&T's estimate of the combined impact of the annual filing on the GTE Telephone Operating Companies ("GTOCs") and the GTE Telephone System Companies ("GTSCs," the former Contel Companies).

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Thomas Waddell, do hereby certify that on this 12th day of June 1997, a copy of the foregoing Opposition of AT&T Corp., together with the attachment, were mailed by U.S. first class mail, postage prepaid, to the parties listed on the attached Service List.

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